

QUALIFICATION STANDARDS OPERATING MANUAL

Group Coverage Qualifications Standards for Technical and Medical Support Positions

This qualification standard covers positions in the General Schedule that involve the performance of one-grade interval technical or medical support work. It contains common patterns of creditable experience and education to be used in making qualifications determinations. Related individual occupational requirements are contained in Section IV-B of this manual. Section V of the same manual identifies the occupations that have test requirements.

This standard may also be used for one-grade interval positions other than those listed if the education and experience pattern is determined to be appropriate.

EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

The following table shows the amounts of education and/or experience required to qualify for positions covered by this standard.

GRADE	OR		
	GENERAL	SPECIALIZED	
GS-1	None	None	None
GS-2	3 months	None	High school graduation or equivalent
GS-3	6 months	None	1 year above high school with course(s) related to occupation, if required
GS-4	6 months	6 months	2 years above high school with courses related to occupation, if required
GS-5	None	1 year equivalent to at least GS-4	4-year course of study above high school leading to a bachelor's degree with courses related to occupation, if required
GS-6 and above	None	1 year equivalent to at least next lower grade level	See NOTE under the Education section

Equivalent combinations of education and experience are qualifying for all grade levels and positions for which both education and experience are acceptable.

While the levels of experience shown for most positions covered by this standard follow the grade level progression pattern outlined in the table, users of the standard should refer to **E.3.(o)** in the "General Policies and Instructions" (Section II of the manual) for guidance on crediting experience for positions with different lines of progression.

General Experience: (1) Any type of work that demonstrates the applicant's ability to perform the work of the position, or (2) experience that provided a familiarity with the subject matter or processes of the broad subject area of the occupation.

Specialized Experience: Experience that equipped the applicant with the particular knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA's) to perform successfully the duties of the position, and that is typically in or related to the work of the position to be filled. To be creditable, specialized experience must have been equivalent to at least the next lower grade level. Applicants who have the 1 year of appropriate specialized experience, as indicated in the table, are not required by this standard to have general experience, education above the high school level, or any additional specialized experience to meet the minimum qualification requirements.

Education: High school graduation or the equivalent is qualifying for GS-2.

Successfully completed post-high school education is qualifying for grades GS-3 through GS-5. This education must have been obtained in an accredited business or technical school, junior college, college or university for which high school graduation or the equivalent is the normal prerequisite. One year of full-time undergraduate study is defined as 30 semester hours, 45 quarter hours, or the equivalent in a college or university or at least 20 hours of classroom instruction per week for approximately 36 weeks in a business or technical school.

For some occupations covered by this standard, 6 semester hours of specific courses are included in the 1 year of education that meets the GS-3 requirements. The 6 semester hours allow for subjects that are common to a broad range

of degree programs, e.g., subjects in the mathematical, physical, or biological sciences. This inclusion corresponds to the second part of the description of general experience, i.e., the subjects provide evidence of a familiarity with the subject matter or processes of the broad subject area of the occupation. At grades GS-4 and above, a portion of the education is usually directly related to the work of the position to be filled. Examples of related courses are provided in the individual occupational requirements where applicable. However, agencies may require other courses if they are considered to be more related to the position to be filled.

NOTE: Graduate education or an internship meets the specialized experience required above GS-5 *only* in those instances where it is directly related to the work of the position. One full year of graduate education meets the requirements for GS-7. Two full years of graduate education or a master's degree meets the requirements for GS-9. One year of full-time graduate education is considered to be the number of credit hours that the school attended has determined to represent 1 year of full-time study. If that information cannot be obtained from the school, 18 semester hours should be considered as satisfying the 1 year of full-time study requirement. Part-time graduate education is creditable in accordance with its relationship to a year of full-time study at the school attended.

Training: Completion of appropriate training such as in-service training programs, training acquired while serving in the Armed Forces, and government-sponsored developmental training programs will be allowed credit on a month-for-month basis, generally through the GS-5 level. Such training meets general or specialized experience requirements depending upon its applicability.

Completion of an intensive, specialized course of study of less than 1 year may meet in full the experience requirements for GS-3. Courses of this type normally require completion of up to 40 hours per week of instruction rather than the usual 20 hours per week, and are usually of *at least* 3 months duration. Such courses may have been obtained through a variety of programs such as those offered by technical schools

and military training programs. To be creditable, such a course must have been designed specifically as career preparation for the work of the position being filled, and must have provided the applicant with the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to do the work.

Combining Experience and Education: Equivalent combinations of successfully completed post-high school education and experience are also qualifying. The combinations described below are those most typical for these positions, i.e., for grades GS-3 through GS-5. If education is used to meet specialized experience requirements, then such education must include courses directly related to the work of the position. (When crediting education, prorate the number of hours of related courses required as a proportion of the total education to be used.)

- **For GS-3** level positions, determine the applicant's total qualifying experience as a percentage of the 6 months' experience required for GS-3; then determine the applicant's education as a percentage of the 1 year of education that meets the requirements for GS-3. Add the two percentages. The total percentage must equal at least 100 percent to qualify an applicant for GS-3.
- **For GS-4** level positions, determine the applicant's total qualifying experience as a percentage of the 1 year of experience required for GS-4; then determine the applicant's education as a percentage of the 2 years of education that meets the requirements for GS-4. Add the two percentages. The total percentage must equal at least 100 percent to qualify an applicant for GS-4.
- **For GS-5** level positions, only education in excess of the first 60 semester hours of a course of study leading to a bachelor's degree is creditable toward meeting the specialized experience requirements. Two full academic years of study, or 60 semester hours, *beyond the second year* is equivalent to 1 year of specialized

experience. Determine the applicant's total qualifying experience as a percent-age of the year of specialized experience required at the GS-5 level. Then determine the applicant's education as a percentage of the education that meets the requirements for GS-5. Add the two percentages. The total percent-age must equal at least 100 percent to qualify an applicant for GS-5.

The following are examples of how education and experience may be combined. They are examples only, and are not all-inclusive.

- The position to be filled is a Pharmacy Aid, GS-3. An applicant has 2 months of experience and 20 semester hours of college. The applicant meets 33 percent of the required experience and 67 percent of the required education. The applicant meets 100 percent of the total requirements and is qualified for the position.
- The position to be filled is an Industrial Engineering Technician, GS-4. An applicant has 5 months of general experience and 36 semester hours of college. The applicant meets 42 percent of the required experience and 60 percent of the required education. The applicant exceeds 100 percent of the total requirements and is qualified for the position. (This example assumes that education is being used to meet the specialized experience requirements, and that at least 7 of the 36 semester hours are in courses directly related to the work of the position.) Examples of such courses are provided in the individual occupational requirements for the Industrial Engineering Technician Series, GS-895, in Section IV-B.
- The position to be filled is a Recreation Assistant, GS-5. An applicant has 8 months of GS-4 level specialized experience and 80 semester hours of college. The applicant meets 67 percent of the required experience and 33 percent of the required education (i.e., 20 semester hours in excess of the first 60 semester hours). The applicant meets 100 percent of the total requirements and is qualified for the position. At least 8 of the 20 semester

hours must be directly related to the work of the position. Examples of such courses are provided in the individual occupational requirements for the Recreation Aid and Assistant Series, GS-189, in Section IV-B.

USING SELECTIVE FACTORS FOR POSITIONS COVERED BY THIS STANDARD

Selective factors must represent knowledge, skills, or abilities that are essential for successful job performance and cannot reasonably be acquired on the job during the period of orientation/training customary for the position being filled. For example, a requirement for knowledge of microbiological laboratory techniques may be needed immediately to perform the duties of a Biological Technician position in a disease research laboratory. If that is the case, such knowledge could be justified as a selective factor in filling the position.

USING INDIVIDUAL OCCUPATIONAL REQUIREMENTS WITH THIS STANDARD

General experience requirements at the GS-2 and GS-3 levels are described in the group coverage standard so that the applicant pool at those "trainee" levels will be as generally inclusive as possible. Thus, examples of qualifying general experience are not included in the "Individual Occupational Requirements" for positions covered by this qualification standard.

Positions at GS-4 and above require specialized experience, education, or training related to the occupation. Examples of qualifying specialized experience are provided for those occupations where such information is currently available. Examples of qualifying post-high school education or training are also provided.

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GS-455

Range Technician Series

GS-455

Use these individual occupational requirements in conjunction with the “Group Coverage Qualification Standard for Technical and Medical Support Positions.”

Specialized Experience (for positions at GS-4 and above): In addition to the experience requirements described in the group coverage standard, seasonal experience may also be creditable. A season of experience is considered to be a period of no less than 3 months of continuous employment on a seasonal basis. Shorter periods may be combined to make a season, provided a total of at least 3 months' experience is shown. For any period where the work exceeded 3 months, the excess work is credited towards an additional season of experience. One season of experience is qualifying for GS-2; 2 seasons of experience qualify for GS-3; and 4 seasons of experience qualify for GS-4. Examples of qualifying specialized experience include:

- Work in the conservation, regulation, and use of public or Federally controlled lands for grazing.
- Range research activities.
- Work in the operation of a livestock ranch or in assisting in the management or preservation of lands comparable to the public range.
- Range or forest fire control, prevention, or suppression work.

OR

Education and Training:

For GS-3: Successful completion of 1 year of study that included at least 6 semester hours in a combination of courses such as range management or conservation, agriculture, forestry, wildlife management, engineering, biology, mathematics, or other natural or physical sciences.

For GS-4: Successful completion of 2 years of study that included at least 12 semester hours in any combination of courses such as forestry, agriculture, crop or plant science, range management or conservation, wildlife management, watershed management, soil science, natural resources (except marine fisheries and oceanography), outdoor recreation management, civil or forest engineering, or wildland fire science. No more than 3 semester hours in mathematics is creditable.

For GS-5: Successful completion of a full 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree (a) with major study in forestry, range management, agriculture, or a subject-matter field directly related to the position, or (b) that included at least 24 semester hours in any combination of courses such as those shown above for GS-4. No more than 6 semester hours in mathematics is creditable.